



Disciples Follow Jesus

Mark 1:14-20


Children love to copy adults' behavior, especially during a game like Follow the Leader or when they play "house." When you demonstrate Jesus' behavior, your children will learn to "follow" Jesus' behavior, too. Use this lesson to help children learn that following Jesus means acting as he did and loving him.



► **Bible Point**
Follow Jesus.

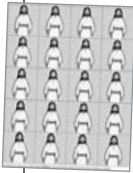
Key Verse
"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Weaving Faith Into Life
Children will follow Jesus daily.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
<p>1 Getting Started <i>about 5 min.</i></p>	<p>Welcome and Celebrate Welcome each other, and praise God through music.</p>	<p>CD player Teacher Pack: CD</p>	
<p>2 Key Verse Activity <i>about 10 min.</i></p>	<p>Everyone's Invited Find hidden hearts that say "Jesus."</p>	<p>Bible, construction paper, scissors, marker</p>	<p>Cut at least 1 heart shape for each child. Write "Jesus" on each heart. Hide the hearts throughout your room.</p>
<p>3 Bible Exploration <i>about 15 min.</i></p>	<p>Puppy Pointers Discover a clue about the men in the Bible.</p>	<p>CD player, Theo puppet, fish lure (without hook), string Teacher Pack: CD</p>	<p>Tie the fish lure to Theo's paw.</p>
	<p>Bible Time: Come, Follow Jesus Dramatize Jesus calling the disciples.</p>	<p>Bible, towels, markers, masking tape Teacher Pack: "Disciples Follow Jesus" poster (from the Big Bible Poster Pack)</p> 	<p>Put masking tape on the floor to make the "boat" and "shoreline." (See the illustration included near the activity.)</p>

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.



LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
<p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Weaving Faith Into Life</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>about 20 min.</i> (Choose 2 centers.)</p>	<p>Center 1: Come, Follow Me Make Jesus figures that have rolling legs, draw disciples, and let Jesus “call” them.</p>	My Bible Hugs, crayons, hole punch, paper fasteners, scissors	Remove the Lesson 8 pages from each My Bible Hugs student book, and write children’s names on them. Then cut out the Jesus figure and the circle from each page.
	<p>Center 2: Sailing Snacks Make snacks shaped like boats.</p>	tape, toothpicks, blue paper plates, fish-shaped crackers, half a hard-boiled egg per child, antibacterial gel (optional)	Peel and cut hardboiled eggs in half lengthwise.
	<p>Center 3: Jesus Came to Town Play a game based on “The Farmer in the Dell.”</p>		
	<p>Center 4: Footprints Make footprints that follow Jesus.</p>	paper, washable ink pads, glue, scissors, markers, wet wipes Teacher Pack: “Jesus Picture Cards”	Cut apart the Jesus cards. 
<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Lasting Impressions</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>about 10 min.</i></p>	<p>Daily Challenges Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God’s Word.</p>	My Bible Hugs	
	<p>Action Prayer Say an action prayer.</p>		
	<p>Weaving Faith at Home Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.</p>		

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.



Disciples Follow Jesus

Mark 1:14-20

BIBLE BACKGROUND
FOR LEADERS

John the Baptist Is Imprisoned and Killed

At the beginning of this passage, we read that John the Baptist was put in prison. Mark doesn't tell us why, but we know from Luke 3:19-20 that Herod put John in prison for rebuking the ruler for various reasons. We also know from Matthew 14:6-11 that Herod eventually—likely in the midst of a drunken party—had John the Baptist beheaded.

Jesus Begins His Ministry

After John was imprisoned, Jesus began his ministry with focus and intention. Mark relates Jesus' message in a nutshell: "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news." For Jews, this would indeed have been good news. What they heard was that David's earthly kingdom would be restored! They'd be freed from Roman bondage! Though their interpretation was incorrect, Jesus' message certainly caught their attention.

Jesus Calls Disciples to Follow Him

At this point, Jesus began gathering around him the band of disciples who would be with him throughout his ministry. The first four were Simon, Andrew, James, and John. We tend to think of these men as simple, ordinary fishermen, and to some degree that perception is correct. They were in a rather lowly occupation and likely had no formal education.

However, John 1:35-42 indicates that two of the men, at least, had been disciples of John the Baptist and thus, to some degree, followers of Jesus already. It's possible that Andrew and James also had been disciples of John the Baptist. All four were spiritual men who were seeking to follow God as closely as

they knew how, so when Jesus asked them to follow him, they did so without hesitation.

Fishermen Respond to Jesus' Call

We needn't necessarily think that these men abandoned their nets and boats along the seashore. James and John left their fishing business in the care of their father and hired hands. Peter and Andrew's situation was probably much the same.

The decision to follow Jesus didn't mean that these disciples recklessly dropped their responsibilities, but it did mean that they were totally committed to Jesus. They had to make following Jesus the most important aspect of their lives.

The Jesus Connection

To follow Jesus, we don't just follow his example or his teachings, though that certainly is important. Nor do we tag along behind him unnoticed. When we follow him, we actually walk alongside him in community and in friendship. Are you aware of Christ's presence in your life? Are you intentional in following his guidance? What can you do to grow closer to Jesus and stay there? Your first step can be to ask for Jesus' help in that. You can write your prayer here.





Welcome and Celebrate Supplies

CD player

Teacher Pack

CD: "Come Marching In" (track 12), "God Is the King" (Psalm 47:7) (track 6)

1 GETTING STARTED

Welcome and Celebrate




Tip Consistently use the same signal to announce a transition to the next activity. You could flip the lights off and on, use a train whistle, have a puppet rustling inside a bag, or sing cleanup songs. Keep it simple, consistent, and fun.

What You'll Do ■■■■■■


As the children arrive, greet each one with a smile. When it's time to begin, use your signal to gather the children together in a circle.

Lead children in singing "Come Marching In" to the tune of "When the Saints Go Marching In" (track 12 on the CD). The song is sung three times. The first time, have kids stand up and march in one direction. The second time, have kids turn and march in the other direction. The third time, have the children wave their hands in the air as they march in place.

 **Oh, when we all come marching in,
Oh, when we all come marching in,
How we love to praise our Lord Jesus,
When we all come marching in!**
(Repeat 2x.)

Say: **This week we'll learn that we can ► FOLLOW JESUS. Let's sing another song. This song will help us show that we want to ► FOLLOW JESUS, who came down from heaven to live with us.**

Lead children in singing "God Is the King" (Psalm 47:7) (track 6). Encourage children to follow the motions in parentheses.

 **Let's sing about the Lord,** *(cup hands over mouth)*
The greatness of our God, *(make muscles)*
God is the king of everything. *(stretch arms above head)*
We're wild about his love *(shake hands over head)*
And all that he has done, *(shake hands over head)*
God is the king of everything. *(stretch arms above head)*

I know God; I talk about him every single day. *(point to head)*
I pray to him at all times; he's the only way. *(make prayer hands)*
I love him! He loves me no matter where I go, *(hug self)*
And everything I do will be for God and God alone. *(stomp foot and stand strong)*



Let's sing about the Lord, *(cup hands over mouth)*
 The greatness of our God, *(make muscles)*
 God is the king of everything. *(stretch arms above head)*
 We're wild about his love *(shake hands over head)*
 And all that he has done, *(shake hands over head)*
 God is the king of everything. *(stretch arms above head)*

Let's sing about the Lord, *(cup hands over mouth)*
 The greatness of our God, *(make muscles)*
 God is the king of everything. *(stretch arms above head)*
 We're wild about his love *(shake hands over head)*
 And all that he has done, *(shake hands over head)*
 God is the king of everything, *(stretch arms above head)*
 God is the king of everything, *(slowly bring arms down, stretching them out)*
 God is the king of everything. *(bring arms to side)*

"God Is the King" (Psalm 47:7) by Jay Stocker and Ben Glover. © 2005, 2006 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Say: **We ► FOLLOW JESUS because he's king of everything. He made the world, and he came to earth so we could be his friend. This week we'll learn how following him helps us be his friend.**

2 KEY VERSE ACTIVITY

Everyone's Invited

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Have children form a circle and sit down. Open your Bible to John 3:16, and show children the words. Tell kids the Bible is God's special book.

Say: **Our Key Verse from the Bible, John 3:16, says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). This means that God loves us so much he sent his Son, Jesus. Let's say our Key Verse together.** Lead children in repeating the simplified version of the Key Verse with you: **God loves us so much he sent his Son, Jesus (John 3:16).**

Say: **God sent Jesus because he loves us. When we believe in Jesus, God will forgive us for the wrong things we've done, and we can live in heaven with God forever! When we ► FOLLOW JESUS, Jesus will be our forever friend. God sent**



Everyone's Invited Supplies

- Bible
- construction paper
- scissors
- marker

Everyone's Invited Easy Prep

Cut at least 1 heart shape for each child. Write "Jesus" on each heart. Hide the hearts throughout your room.





Jesus for you. Point to a child. **And you.** Point to another child. **And you!** Point to another child. Continue until you've pointed to each child in your group.

Say: **I hid hearts all around our room. There's a heart for each of you to remind you that God sent Jesus for everyone in this room and everyone in the world.**

Explain that kids can begin searching for their hearts. Say that as soon as someone finds a heart, he or she will come sit on the floor in the middle of the room. Once everyone has a heart, gather children in a circle on the floor, and encourage the kids to say the Key Verse to each other: **God loves us so much he sent his Son, Jesus (John 3:16).**

Say: **God loves us so much he sent his Son, Jesus, for each one of us! Take your heart home to remind you that God loves you and God sent Jesus for you! Let's say our Key Verse together one more time.** Lead children in saying the Key Verse with you: **God loves us so much he sent his Son, Jesus (John 3:16).**

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- What did you like about finding a heart that was just for you?
- What do you like about knowing that Jesus has a special love for you?

Say: **Jesus loves each of you so much. He has a special love for you! And God sent Jesus so we could be friends with him. Let's remember this week that when we love Jesus and believe in him, we also ► FOLLOW JESUS.**

3 BIBLE EXPLORATION

Puppy Pointers

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Say: **Listen, everyone, Theo's coming! He has something to show us. Let's find out what it is.** Play "Here, Theo" (track 4 on the CD), and bring out Theophilus the FaithRetriever.

Theo: Hi, everybody!

Teacher: Hello, Theo! It's so good to see you at church with us today. What do you have there?

Theo: I brought my fishing gear!

Teacher: Why did you bring fishing gear?

Theo: Well, I heard someone talking about fishermen.

Teacher: I bet you did, Theo! Today we're going to learn about some men who stopped fishing to ► **FOLLOW JESUS.** Friends, let's say our Bible Point for Theo.

(Lead children in saying the Bible Point for Theo: ► **FOLLOW JESUS.**)

Puppy Pointers Supplies

CD player
Theo puppet
fish lure (without hook)
string

Teacher Pack

CD: "Here, Theo"
(track 4)

Puppy Pointers Easy Prep

Tie the fish lure to
Theo's paw.



Teacher: We can all follow Jesus, just as the fishermen did.

Theo: Jesus sounds like someone you'd really want to follow! I'm going to run and put my fishing gear back in my house.

Teacher: That's good! Friends, let's say goodbye to Theo.

Encourage the children to wave or say goodbye to Theo. Then put Theo away in a safe place for next week's use.

Talk With Kids

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- **When have you stopped doing something to do something even more important?**
- **Why do you think following Jesus is important?**

Say: **Today as we read the Bible, we'll hear how Jesus called some men to come and follow him. Let's find out if they decided to ► FOLLOW JESUS.**

Bible Time: Come, Follow Jesus

What You'll Do

Show children the "Disciples Follow Jesus" poster (from the Big Bible Poster Pack), and point to the disciples.

Have the children gather near the "shoreline" and "boat" that you created ahead of time. Choose children to pretend to be James, John, and Zebedee, and have them sit in the masking tape boat and pretend to fish. Choose other children to play the parts of Jesus, Simon, and Andrew. Have the child playing Jesus walk along the "shoreline," and have the children playing Simon and Andrew stand and pretend to fish from the shore, using a towel or small lace tablecloth as a "fishing net." Have the rest of the children pretend to be fishermen, either fishing from the boat or fishing and mending nets on the shore.

Open your Bible to Mark 1:14-20, and show children the words. Tell children that the Bible is God's special book.

Say: **Jesus went to a place called Galilee, which was by the Sea of Galilee, and taught people about God. As he taught, he looked for people who were listening very carefully. Jesus wanted special friends who were very good listeners. Jesus wanted people who loved to listen to God's Word.**

Have the child acting as Jesus stand a short distance from Simon and Andrew. Have the children continue to pretend to fish.

Say: **As Jesus walked along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers holding a fishing net. Their names were Simon and Andrew, and they were fishermen.** Have Jesus stop to talk to Simon and Andrew.



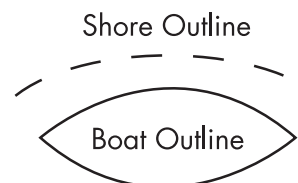
Bible Time: Come, Follow Jesus Supplies

Bible
towels
markers
masking tape

Teacher Pack
"Disciples Follow Jesus" poster (from the Big Bible Poster Pack)

Bible Time: Come, Follow Jesus Easy Prep

Put masking tape on the floor to make the "boat" and "shoreline." (See the pattern included here.)





Say: **He said, “Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men!” So the two brothers dropped their net, and they followed Jesus.** Have the two children line up behind Jesus, and follow him.

As Jesus continued along the shore, he saw two more brothers who were fishermen. They were with their father in his boat. The brothers’ names were James and John. Jesus waved to the brothers. Have the child pretending to be Jesus wave. **And the two brothers waved back.** Have James and John wave.

Jesus said, “Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men!” And they did. They left their nets and waved goodbye to their father and the other fishermen. Have the children pretending to be James and John walk away from the boat outline and wave goodbye to everyone in it. **Their father and the fishermen waved goodbye to James and John.** Have the children in the boat wave to James and John. Have James and John join the line behind the child pretending to be Jesus.

James, John, Simon, and Andrew became Jesus’ special friends. Jesus chose his special friends to help him do his work on earth. Jesus called the fishermen to come, follow him, and he’s still calling us today to come, follow him. Let’s draw ourselves on this poster to show that we want to follow Jesus, too. Give the children markers, and encourage them to draw themselves on the poster near the disciples.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What do you think about the men who stopped what they were doing to follow Jesus?**
- **Why do you think people want to follow Jesus?**
- **Why do you want to follow Jesus?**

Say: **The fishermen saw Jesus and they just stopped what they were doing and followed him. They saw something special in Jesus. They knew he was important and they wanted to ► FOLLOW JESUS. We can ► FOLLOW JESUS, too!**

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4

WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Choose at least two of the learning centers to help reinforce today’s Bible lesson. Gather the needed materials, and put the supplies in an out-of-sight area until you’re ready for them. Allow the children to choose which center they’d like to explore first. Then circulate among the children as they create and explore. Encourage them to make connections between their activities and the Bible by asking them the questions included with each center’s description.



CENTER 1:

Come, Follow Me

What You'll Do

Give each child a Lesson 8 page from My Bible Hugs and the Jesus figures and circles you cut out ahead of time. Say: **Today we learned that Jesus walked along the shores of the Sea of Galilee. He told some fishermen, "Come, follow me." Let's show Jesus walking along the shore on our My Bible Hugs pages.**

Help children each punch the holes as marked and attach the circle to the back of the Jesus figure with a paper fastener. Provide crayons so children can draw disciples on their My Bible Hugs pages. Show kids how to "walk" the Jesus figure down the path and pretend he's calling out, "Come, follow me."

Say: **When Jesus told the disciples, "Come, follow me," he wanted them to go with him, but he also wanted them to listen to him and hear what he told them. He wanted to help them change their lives so they could know God better.**

Talk With Kids

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- What did you like about walking Jesus on the shore?
- What do you like about following Jesus and listening to him?
- What can you do to follow Jesus in your life?

Say: **Jesus wanted the disciples to follow him because he loved them. He wanted them to have better lives because of what he could teach them. Jesus loves us, too, and he wants us to follow him so we can have better lives. Let's ► FOLLOW JESUS.**

CENTER 2:

Sailing Snacks

What You'll Do

Have children clean their hands and then sit down for the snack. Say: **James, John, Simon, and Andrew were fishermen, and when Jesus came to speak where they were fishing, he told them to follow him. They stopped fishing and followed him right away. Let's make that scene using our snack foods.**

Give each child a blue paper plate, several fish-shaped crackers, a toothpick, half a hard-boiled egg, and a piece of tape. Help each child make a "sail" by folding the tape in half over the end of a toothpick. Encourage each child to push the sail into the middle of the hard-boiled egg and then put the "boat" on the blue paper plate. Suggest that



Center 1: Come, Follow Me Supplies

My Bible Hugs
crayons
hold punch
paper fasteners
scissors

Center 1: Come, Follow Me Easy Prep

Remove the Lesson 8 pages from each My Bible Hugs student book, and write children's names on them. Then cut out the Jesus figure and the circle from each page.

Center 2: Sailing Snacks Supplies

tape
toothpicks
blue paper plates
fish-shaped crackers
half a hardboiled egg
per child
antibacterial gel
(optional)

! ALLERGY ALERT

Center 2: Sailing Snacks Easy Prep

Peel and cut hardboiled eggs in half lengthwise.





children pretend their plates are the water where the boats sail and the fish crackers swim.

Let the children pretend to float their boats and swim their fish for a few minutes. Then pray, thanking God for the snack, and let children eat.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Say: **The disciples were excited and happy to ► FOLLOW JESUS. They knew that Jesus was special, and they wanted to help him. We can all choose to follow Jesus by believing in Jesus and doing the things Jesus did. Let's tell the world about Jesus so everyone will want to ► FOLLOW JESUS!**

■ CENTER 3:

Jesus Came to Town

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Say: **Let's play a game and pretend we're following Jesus like the disciples did.**

Help the children play a game similar to "The Farmer in the Dell" as they sing "Jesus Came to Town" to the same tune. Have the children form a circle, and choose one child to play the part of Jesus. Have the child playing Jesus walk around the inside of the circle as you lead the children in singing the first four lines. At line five, have "Jesus" choose a child to follow him. At the end of the eighth line, the two children will be standing in the center of the circle.

Sing the third verse with the most recent child chosen becoming the "chooser," and repeat that verse until every child has been chosen and is standing in the center of the now nonexistent circle.

Sing the fourth verse to end the game.



**Jesus came to town.
He shared the love of God.
Hallelujah! God is here!
Come, follow him today.**

**He shared God's love with [chosen child's name].
He shared God's love with [chosen child's name].
Hallelujah! God is here!
Come, follow him today.**

[Chooser's name] **tells** [chosen child's name].
[Chooser's name] **tells** [second child's name].
**Hallelujah! God is here!
Come, follow him today.**



No one stands alone.
No one stands alone.
Hallelujah! God is here!
Come, follow him today.

Talk With Kids

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- What was it like to be chosen to follow Jesus?
- Tell about a time you were picked to do something.
- Why do you like that Jesus wants you to follow him?

Say: Jesus loves us, and Jesus wants everyone in the world to follow him. And it's really wonderful to ► FOLLOW JESUS, too.

CENTER 4:

Footprints

What You'll Do

Say: Jesus' friends dropped what they were doing and followed Jesus when he said, "Come, follow me." Let's make a craft to show that we want to ► FOLLOW JESUS, too.

Give each child a piece of paper and a marker. Encourage children to each draw a path on the paper and then glue a Jesus picture card to the end of the path. Set out ink pads that children can share. Show kids how to press their first two fingers into the ink and then press them onto the paper path to make "footprints."

Encourage kids to shout out some ways they can follow Jesus as they "walk" their fingers and make footprints along the paths to Jesus. Then have kids clean their fingers.

Talk With Kids

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- What was easy or hard about making footprints along your path?
- What's easy or hard about following Jesus all the time?
- Why do you know it's right to follow Jesus?

Say: It was a little funny walking with our fingers, and it might've been a little hard to stay on the path sometimes. Like that, it could've been hard sometimes for the disciples to follow Jesus, but they knew it was worth it. We can believe in Jesus and follow him, too. We know that if we believe in Jesus and follow him, we will live forever with him in heaven. Let's ► FOLLOW JESUS!



Center 4: Footprints Supplies

-
- paper
 - washable ink pads
 - glue
 - scissors
 - markers
 - wet wipes

Teacher Pack
"Jesus Picture Cards"

Center 4: Footprints Easy Prep

Cut apart the Jesus cards.



Daily Challenges
Supplies

My Bible Hugs

5 LASTING
IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

After the children have cleaned up their centers, bring everyone back to a circle area on the floor. Review the lesson activities and the Bible Point, and then encourage the children to share what they remember about what they learned from the Bible today.

Also use this time to challenge kids in their faith. Encourage them to choose a Daily Challenge for applying today's lesson to their lives this week. Use this challenge for encouraging your children's growing relationships with Jesus.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Say: **Today we learned that we ► FOLLOW JESUS. I would like each of you this week to choose a way to follow God.**

Give kids these two challenges to choose from:

- **Jesus told us to help others. This week, follow Jesus by helping your mom or dad with something.**
- ■ **Jesus told us to take care of people who are sick. This week, follow Jesus by making a card for someone who's sick or sad. Ask your mom or dad to help you deliver the card.**

Say: **If you want to help your parents, circle the choice with one dot. If you want to make a card, circle the choice with two dots.** Check that each child circled a choice on his or her My Bible Hugs page. Make sure you choose a challenge as well, and tell the kids. Your commitment will inspire your kids and give them an opportunity to see God at work in your life as well as in theirs!

Action Prayer

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Have the children form a circle. Say: **Let's all tell a way we want to follow Jesus.** Let each child tell a way he or she wants to follow Jesus. Help children by giving them examples, such as helping others, learning from the Bible, or being kind. Then have kids do the actions as you say the prayer.

Pray: **Thank you, God, for calling me** (*fold hands in prayer*)

To come and follow you. (*walk in place*)

As I learn here with my friends today, (*take hands*)

Lord, I want to follow you. (*nod head*)

I'll listen and obey your words; (*put hand behind ear to listen*)



I know you'll help me, too. *(fold hands in prayer)*
In Jesus' name, amen.

Weaving Faith at Home

Have children take home their My Bible Hugs pages whether they worked on them or not. Have the children tell their parents the challenge they committed to in the “Daily Challenges” activity. Encourage the parents to help their kids fulfill this commitment during the week. By working together and focusing on the same goals, you and parents can help children weave faith into their lives!

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church's families. Available at group.com/digital.



